United Nations S/2016/154

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 17 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you with reference to the letter from the Syrian regime's representative dated 4 February 2016 and multiple others from the same representative.

A foreign national, Hytham Qassap, referred to in the said letter, was arrested and duly prosecuted along with his five Turkish citizen contacts in 2013 while trying to acquire in the open market of Hatay Province six different types of chemicals, two of which were not allowed for sale without a permit.

Hytham Qassap was indicted and tried for "attempting to provide arms to terrorist organizations" and "being a member of a terrorist organization", while the said five Turkish citizens were indicted of "attempting to provide arms to terrorist organizations".

As a result of the criminal proceedings that were finalized on 29 December 2015, it was found that the suspects were not able to acquire the chemicals concerned and were hence acquitted of the charge of "attempting to provide arms to terrorist organizations". Nevertheless, Hytham Qassap has been sentenced to 12 years in prison for "being a member of a terrorist organization".

Turkey is fully committed to its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the above-mentioned case demonstrates how Turkey monitors meticulously all sorts of potential criminal acts, including the acquisition of sensitive chemical materials, and takes the necessary security, intelligence and legal measures in order to foil any attempt to breach the provisions of the Convention.

The Syrian regime, which continues its efforts to prolong its grip on power by employing all instruments of force and violence available to itself, holds a well-known record of using chemical weapons, and its accusations found in the letter in reference are a part of its campaign aimed at distracting the attention from its gross violations of international law and Security Council resolutions. The "negligence" on the part of the Syrian regime in taking measures on the capture of its chemical weapons by Daesh/ISIL, as highlighted in my letter dated 6 January 2016, on the other hand, is an example of the collaboration between the regime and Daesh/ISIL.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Y. Halit **Çevik**
Permanent Representative

16-02469 (E) 190216

Please recycle